



JULY HEALTH TIP



With the arrival of summer, everyone is excited to get outdoors and enjoy the warm and sunny weather. But don't forget about Sun Safety! Here are some tips to keep in mind for protecting yourself and your loved ones.

It's important to play it safe in the sun because of harmful UV rays which can cause sunburns. Just a few serious sunburns can increase the risk for skin cancer, even if the burns occur early on in childhood. What can you do to reduce your sun exposure? Harmful UV rays are strongest during the midday, so it's good to limit outdoor exposure at this time, or seek shade if you are spending time outside. Even on a cool and cloudy day, you need protection from the sun's rays which still come through the clouds! Wearing long sleeved clothing or other forms of cover-up helps to reduce the UV rays that reach the skin. Even if you are wearing clothing for cover, you should always apply sunscreen to yourself and children with a minimum SPF of 15 that includes UVA AND UVB protection. When applying sunscreen, make sure to apply a generous amount 30 minutes before going outdoors. If you or your children are in the water, be sure to reapply sunscreen during the day and choose waterproof or water resistant sunscreens. Know that sunscreen is not meant to allow you to spend more time in the sun than you would otherwise. Sunscreen *reduces* damage from UV rays, it does not eliminate it. Make sure to protect areas like the ears, nose, lips and tops of feet. Your skin is not the only thing you want to protect in the sun, though! Sunglasses are a good way to protect your eyes from harmful UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Choose sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of UVA and UVB rays as possible. Wear a hat to protect the face, scalp, ears and neck in addition to applying sunscreen to these areas.

Remember, you can have fun in the sun while being sun wise and sun safe! For more tips on protecting yourself and loved ones from skin cancer, visit the Health Department's cancer prevention program at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/cancerprevention.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Play It Safe in the Sun: A Guide for Parents. Available:
<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/pdf/CYCParentsBrochure.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Skin Cancer Prevention, Available:
http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm

Food and Drug Administration. Sun Safety: Save Your Skin! Available:
<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049090.htm>